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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8269
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS IMMEDIATE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 4799
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 2145
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 1653
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA 1365
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY 3713
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1645
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 2408
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 2488
RUEHBA/AMCONSUL PERTH 0624
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RHHJJPI/USPACOM HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 JAKARTA 000481

SIPDIS

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DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/PD (FOR LNEIGHBORS/GMCLOUGHLIN)
IIP/C, IIP/P, IIP/EAP (DAVENDASORA), EAP/MTS,
EAP/MLS (COPE), EAP/RSP, G (CURRIE)
NSC FOR EPHU

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [BM](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: BURMA -- JAKARTA CONFERENCE ISSUES ROBUST
DECLARATION, URGES FOLLOW-ON ACTION

REF: JAKARTA 452 AND PREVIOUS

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Classified By: Pol/C Joseph Legend Novak, reasons 1.4(b+d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: A regional USG-funded civil society conference on Burma concluded March 7 in Jakarta with a declaration calling on ASEAN to reject the regime's May referendum unless there was genuine dialogue and popular involvement. With participation by regional experts--including a monk who fled Burma--the conference caught the attention of Indonesian decision-makers, such as the Defense Minister who attended a key session. The conference netted extensive international and local media coverage. END SUMMARY.

A DECLARATION

12. (U) An EAP/PD-funded conference on the "Role of ASEAN Civil Society in Supporting Human Rights and Democracy in Burma" issued a two-page "Jakarta Declaration on Burma" on March 7. The declaration stated that civil society conference participants "call upon the governments and peoples of ASEAN to reject the Burmese regime's constitutional referendum unless steps are taken to guarantee genuine popular participation and a meaningful and time-bound tripartite dialogue." The declaration further stated that:

--An unfair referendum could lead to social unrest and instability within Burma which could spill over into the region exacerbating issues such as security, infectious diseases and transnational crime.
--If ASEAN goes along with an illegitimate election process for 2010--which excludes Aung San Suu Kyi (ASSK)--it risks undermining its own credibility.
--That the referendum be credible and transparent, allowing UN and ASEAN monitoring of the referendum and elections.

--That conditions for a free and fair referendum and elections include: a nationwide ceasefire; unconditional release of ASSK and other opposition leaders; and dissolution of laws that inhibit basic freedoms.

--Support of UN efforts towards a tri-partite dialogue and national reconciliation, call for a UNSC global arms embargo and targeted financial sanctions, and implementation of UNSC Resolutions 1674 (protecting civilians in armed conflict), 1612 (protecting children) and 1325 (protecting women and girls).

--That Indonesia, with the backing of ASEAN and the international community, has a key role in promoting an "all-inclusive dialogue on transition to democratic Burma" which includes "all Burma stakeholders, not just the regime."

13. (U) The declaration lists ten specific human rights, humanitarian and poverty alleviation steps which should be taken with the assistance of civil society. These include a call on ASEAN to initiate a "Commission of Inquiry" into the September crackdown and for the international community to be more proactive in supporting Burmese civil society in order to prepare it for the long term transition to democracy.

14. (U) The conference was attended by some 22 well-known regional experts on Burma (reftel). In addition, some 200 Indonesian civil society leaders, government leaders, politicians and third country diplomats also attended different parts of the conference, participating in substantive ways. For example, two prominent Indonesian Parliamentarians who are members of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Myanmar Caucus (AIPMC), Djoko Susilo and Marsuki Darusman, took turns attending the opening, closing and other key parts of the conference. While the Ambassador attended the opening ceremony, conference participants also attended a reception at the DCM's and Pol/C spoke on a panel

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regarding the international response to the Burma crisis.

DEFENSE MINISTER KEENLY INTERESTED

15. (C) The GOI declined invitations to take part in the conference opening citing its ongoing diplomatic efforts but Minister of Defense Juwono Sudarsono made an appearance for the session on international responses to the Burma crisis, staying for two hours and interacting on the sidelines with key Burmese civil society leaders. (Note: NGO conference organizers said Juwono had personally asked them many questions about the purpose of the conference.) Juwono commented publicly on GOI policy, saying that democracy will take 10 to 15 years to crystallize as Burmese civil society matures to the point it can take over governance and as more enlightened younger military officers take power.

16. (C) The Department of Foreign Affairs also sent two mid-level officers to attend the conference and special envoy Ali Alatas sent one of his assistants. A top advisor to President Yudhoyono, Lt.Gen. (ret.) Agus Widjono--sent as a special envoy to Burma in November 2007--attended a reception for conference participants hosted March 6 by the DCM. Widjono talked with four influential Burmese civil society leaders for an hour at the DCM's (the Burmese were: Win Min, Nyo Ohn Myint, Zaw Oo, and Wong Aung), giving them full opportunity to explain the pro-active role Indonesia should play in pushing for democracy. Widjono, who has a solid reputation for supporting democracy and human rights, listened carefully, the Burmese told Dep Pol/C.

A MONK'S GRIPPING STORY

17. (U) Media attention focused on Burmese monk U Awbata, recently exiled to Sri Lanka after fleeing Burma due to the crackdown, who spoke of witnessing his fellow monks shot down and brutally beaten in September 2007. "It does not matter how many tears I shed, I cannot erase these images from my mind," he said during his opening remarks through an

interpreter, also calling on the international community to stop selling arms to the military generals who "have used their guns to crush and kill their own people."

A LOW-KEY U.S. ROLE

¶8. (C) The USG purposefully kept a low profile, not addressing the opening nor highlighting our sponsorship, instead letting civil society have full credit for the conference. However, the Ambassador, DCM and Public Affairs Counselor attended the conference, and the Pol/C delivered remarks on USG policy during the session on international response--attended by the Defense Minister. These remarks were widely reported in the media. In addition, Emboffs were allowed to sit in on the working meetings at which the declaration was drafted. Two Americans also participated from civil society: Zaw Oo of American University and Dr. Voravit Suwanvanichkij of John Hopkins University.

MEDIA SPREADS THE MESSAGE

¶9. (U) About 40 media covered the conference, including VOA TV/Radio, AP, AFP, Deutsche Welle, Bloomberg, Asia Pacific News, The Nation from Bangkok, and New Straits Times from Malaysia, Indonesian television stations and other wire services and publications were also there.

¶10. (U) VOA and AP stories and photos focusing on the monk were disseminated March 6. In addition, PAS provided its own video footage of the conference to the monk for a documentary Burmese monks are producing for their upcoming world tour, to one of the Burmese civil society leaders to disseminate in

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the exile community in Thailand, and to the Democratic Voice of Burma for a feature they plan to disseminate within Burma, through satellite, internet and DVD. Post will also distribute the Washington File story on the conference along with photos and has posted the declaration on the Embassy website.

¶11. (U) Conference material, including presentations, are being sent to EAP/PD, along with a DVD with highlights from the first day. The conference declaration has already been sent by e-mail to EAP offices and regional posts. A one-hour DVD with highlights from the conference will be prepared in the next week and sent to Washington offices, regional posts and conference participants.

KEEPING UP THE MOMENTUM

¶12. (U) The conference concluded by announcing follow-up activities, including a conference in Quebec in late March--inspired by the Jakarta conference--and an NED/Open Society-funded monks' tour and photo exhibit organized by NDI, which will visit Indonesia during the Buddhist Waisak holiday on May 20, as well as many other regional activities.

¶13. (C) Over all, participants seemed invigorated by the conference which they said made a real contribution towards stimulating regional civil society action re Burma. They especially were heartened that envoy Agus Widjono said he would consult with them as the GOI Burma initiative moves forward. Hopefully, momentum from this conference can be maintained through upcoming follow-on activities, and maintaining the links among the Burmese participants and Indonesian decision-makers, while the message is spread outwards via the media.

HUME